

REMARKS

As examined in the August 11, 2004 Office Action, the application included claims 1-42 (not claims 1-44). Claims 1 and 3-83 are in the application, after entry of the present Amendment. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim 2 has been cancelled and combined into claim 1. New claims 43-58 have been added. New claim 43 is similar to amended claim 1, with the airflow opening/workpiece relationship expressed in terms of area, rather than in terms of diameter (20-80% of diameter corresponding to 4-64% of area).

New claims 44, 45, and 47 largely, but not identically, represent claims 8, 12, and 14, rewritten into independent form, respectively.

New claims 48 and 49 generally represent claims 28 and 29 rewritten into independent form, respectively, and with a more general description of the engagement means. New claim 50 is the same as claim 28 and depends from claim 49.

New claims 51-58 describe a processor having magnets, as shown in Figs. 5 and 8, as described at 0042-0044.

New claims 59-67 are similar respectively to claims 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12 and 13. New claims 15-17 are similar to claims 68-70. New claims 71 76 are similar to claims 21-26. New claims 77-79 are similar to claims 27-29. New claims 59-79 describe a processor, rather than the system as in claims 1, 15, 21 or 27. New claims 80 and 81 describe the snorkel discussed at 0054. New claims 82 and 83 describe the sump discussed at 0046.

Claims 1, 17, 22, 35, 59, 70 and 72 describe an air flow opening with a diameter about 20 to 80% of the workpiece. Claim 43 describe a similar relationship based on

the area of the workpiece. However, the workpiece itself is not a claimed element, and no specific diameter of the workpiece is specified. However, the Examiner will appreciate that the processor is designed for processing workpieces having a specific diameter, such as 150 mm, 200mm or 300mm diameter workpieces or wafers. Consequently, the diameter of the air flow opening will vary with the diameter of the intended workpiece.

The claims describe systems or processors having various advantages. Specifically, new claims 51-58 and 71-76 describe a processor wherein a rotor is repelled via a magnet. This allows for improved alignment between the rotors, improved reliability, and reduced potential for particle generation.

Claims 15-26 and 30-42 are allowed in the August 11, 2004 Office Action. In view of the indication of allowability of claims 2, 8, 12, 13, 14, 28, and 29, it is submitted that amended claim 1 and new claims 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, and 49, respectively, are in condition for allowance. New claim 43 is believed to be allowable for the same reasons as claim 2.

Accordingly, the only pending claims not including content indicated to be allowable in the August 11, 2004 Office Action are claim 27, and new claims 51-58 and 77-83. Regarding the double patenting rejection at page 2 of the Office Action, claim 27 describes engagement means for engaging the first rotor to the second rotor, without the need for physical contact with the first rotor. New claims 51-58 describe magnets. Neither of these features is shown in U.S. Publication No. 2004/0129302. Accordingly, none of the pending claims conflict with U.S. Publication No. 2004/0129302, as the claims of that application are directed to different features.

Regarding the rejection of claim 27 at page 3 of the August 11, 2004 Office Action, Inoue et al., USP 5,613,343 describes a marking apparatus for electronic components, which discloses use of electromagnets 68 and 75 in Fig. 20. However, the electromagnets are unrelated to any rotors, as claimed. In Fig. 3 of Inoue et al., the rotors 90 and 18 are part of a conveying system. They are connected by a supply track 94. None of these components, or the entire system, is related to workpiece processing, via rotors engaging each other to form a processing chamber, as claimed. Moreover, there is no engagement whatsoever between the rotors 90 and 18, i.e., they remain permanently spaced apart. Claim 27 and new claims 51-58, and 77-83 are therefore allowable over Inoue et al.

A Notice of Allowance is requested.

Dated: November 10, 2004

Customer No. 45540
Perkins Coie LLP
Patent – LA
P.O. Box 1208
Seattle, WA 98111-1208
Phone: (310) 788-9900
Fax: (206) 332-7198

Respectfully submitted,

PERKINS COIE LLP

By: Kenneth H. Ohriner
Kenneth H. Ohriner
Reg. No. 31,646